

Message Text

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43

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ISO-00 XMB-07 TRSE-00 AID-20

IGA-02 DRC-01 RSC-01 /078 W
----- 078130

R 060800Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5183

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USDOC WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, BEXP, GB

SUBJ: TRANSGABON RAILROAD: POSSIBLE GM CONTRACT

USDOC FOR STEPHEN CONGER

ABIDJAN FOR WARCDO REDSO/WA

REF: STATE A-670 DATED JANUARY 23, 1974

1. COLOMBANI (REPUTABLE LOCAL BUSINESSMAN) WROTE GENERAL MOTORS DECEMBER 18, 1973 STATING THAT HE INTERESTED IN ASSISTING GM IN GETTING CONTRACT FOR LOCOMOTIVES AND ASKING THE PRICE, THE DELIVERY DATE, MAINTENANCE AND PAYMENT CONDITIONS.

2. GM REPLIED TO COLOMBANI IN LETTER DATED JANUARY 16, 1974 SIGNED BY G.S. GLAIBER. GM LETTER GAVE NO ANSWERS TO ANY OF COLOMBANI'S QUESTIONS STATING IT AWAITING CALL FOR BIDS (WHICH NOW EXPECTED LATE FEBRUARY OR EARLY MARCH). IN ALMOST INDECIPHERABLY BAD FRENCH, LETTER SEEMED ALSO TO SAY THAT, BECAUSE OF "SPECIFICATIONS" ESTABLISHED FOR LOCOMOTIVES, DELIVERY DATE FOR GM WOULD BE LONGER THAN FOR EUROPEANS AS SPECIFICATIONS
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WOULD PERMIT EUROPEANS TO SUPPLY LOCOMOTIVES FROM

CURRENT PRODUCTION WHEREAS THEY WOULD REQUIRE GM TO MAKE SPECIAL PROTOTYPE NEVER BEFORE ASSEMBLED. LETTER DID NOT GIVE ANY DETAILS AS TO WHAT SPECIFICATIONS INVOLVED.

3. SEVERAL EUROPEAN FIRMS ARE ALREADY MOVING ON INSIDE TRACK BY MAKING PROPOSALS BASED ON SPECS WITHOUT WAITING FOR FORMAL CALL FOR BIDS. COLOMBANI, THROUGH HIS OWN SOURCES, ALREADY HAS SOME INFORMATION ON SOME OF THESE OFFERS.

4. COLOMBANI OBVIOUSLY PERPLEXED AND DISCOURAGED BY GM REPLY AS IS EMBASSY. WILL BE RECALLED THAT MEETING OF DONORS HELD LIBREVILLE NOVEMBER 21-22, 1973 WAS FOR PURPOSE OF AGREEING ON SPECS AND THAT FULL DOSSIER OF SPECS SENT WASHINGTON WEEKS PRIOR TO MEETING. WILL ALSO BE RECALLED THAT EMBASSY URGED THAT THESE BE CAREFULLY STUDIED TO AVOID INCLUSION OF SPECS THAT WOULD FAVOR EUROPEANS TO DETRIMENT OF U.S. FIRMS. NO EXCEPTIONS TO SPECS WERE MADE BY U.S. REPS AT NOVEMBER 21-22 MEETING. GM NOW CLAIMS THAT SPECS (WITHOUT MENTIONING WHICH ONES) REQUIRE GM BUT NOT EUROPEANS TO BUILD SPECIAL ORDER LOCOMOTIVES NEVER BEFORE ASSEMBLED. THIS IS PRECISELY SITUATION WHICH NOVEMBER 21-22 MEETING AFFORDED US OPPORTUNITY TO OBJECT TO. YET USAID REP WHO ATTENDED MEETING FROM ABIDJAN HAD NEVER SEEN SPECS BEFORE HE ARRIVED LIBREVILLE. CERTAINLY LOCOMOTIVE SPECS COULD HAVE BEEN SHOWN TO GM AND GE IN U.S. PRIOR TO MEETING AND ANY DISCREPANCY DISCOVERED AT THAT TIME.

4. IN ANY CASE, COLOMBANI POINTS OUT THAT DESPITE HIS EXCELLENT CONTACTS AT PRESIDENCY (WHICH EMBASSY CAN VOUCH FOR) HE CAN DO NOTHING FOR GM AT MOMENT AS HE WOULD BE LAUGHED OUT OF ROOM IF HE ATTEMPTED TO PLEAD GM CAUSE ON BASIS INFO IN GM LETTER.

5. COLOMBANI WILL BE IN PARIS FROM FEBRUARY 11 TO 26 AT FOLLOWING ADDRESS: 23 RUE CLAUDE PERRASSI, PARIS 75016, TELEPHONE 288-95-44. IF GM SERIOUSLY INTERESTED IN BUSINESS, STRONGLY RECOMMEND THEY HAVE SOMEONE KNOWLEDGEABLE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND RESPONSIBLE CONTACT COLOMBANI IN PARIS DURING THIS PERIOD TO DISCUSS MATTER FURTHER.

6. EMBASSY WOULD ALSO BE CURIOUS TO LEARN WHAT SPECIFICATIONS WERE INCLUDED BY OCTRA IN ITS DOSSIER WHICH FAVOR EUROPEANS OVER U.S. FIRMS.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: PLEASE PASS SUBSTANCE PARAS 3 AND 5

TO GM IN U.S.

8. DECLASSIFY ON RECEIPT.
MCKESSON

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Authority: morefirh
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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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Disposition Reason:
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